WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION
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"THE AGRICULTURAL FRONT"

(For Immediate Broadcast)

November...1944

It's November on the "Agricultural Front". And this colorful month brings its usual quota of bright leaves, pumpkins, and Thanksgiving cheer. And in addition to the usual happenings, there's plenty to report of particular interest to you. Today, I'd like to tell you about Thanksgiving turkeys, the plentiful supplies of sweet potatoes, the dairy situation, meat supply prospects, and the latest crop situation, and an announcement about Victory Gardens.

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Supplies of turkeys for civilians this Thanksgiving will probably not meet the demand. Although turkeys for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day have been shipped to servicemen and women in the more remote war theatres, the turkey set-aside order can't be revoked until all holiday turkey requirements for the armed forces have been met. Under the set-aside order, all turkeys produced or marketed in specified areas must be held for the Quartermaster Corps or delivered to them. Last year, the Embargo Order, under which turkeys for the armed forces were set aside, was terminated on October 25th. But this year, military requirements are much higher, and there is a shortage of labor in many processing plants, so it's taking longer to meet military needs. That means that although this season's turkey crop is expected to be the largest on record, there just won't be enough turkeys to fill our needs at home.

However, there will be more turkeys for us on Christmas and New Year's Day. So, let's bide our time until December...so men and women in uniform can have first pickin's in November.

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The hurricane which struck Florida and the Atlantic Coast October 19th to 21st did considerable crop damage. Citrus fruits were heavily hit. The loss in the grapefruit crop amounts to 43 percent or a loss of 15 million boxes. Production of Florida oranges is expected to total 42 million boxes, a reduction of 10 million boxes due to a hurricane damage. The loss in tangerines was not as great as in oranges and grapefruit. There were also heavy damages among the vegetable crops. Some of the crops which suffered large losses were snap beans, celery, green peppers, Irish potatoes, and tomatoes.

The ill winds of the hurricane did blow somebody some good. The rain which accompanied the recent storm hit the sweet potato crop at just the right time. As a result, the yield has been increased to the extent of a million bushels more than previously expected. While all the seaboard states from Florida to New Jersey grow sweets, nearly all of the crop from Maryland and Virginia comes to market. Those growers have had practically no means of curing and storing their crop...and so there's a plentiful supply of sweet potatoes. The War Food Administration is asking homemakers to buy more sweet potatoes, and serve them to their families often. Sweets are a welcome addition to dinner tables these tangy fall days...so buy some today.

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And now, some facts about the dairy situation. Next year's milk production may reach 119 billion pounds...that is, if returns to dairy farmers...and that includes dairy production payments...are held to the same level as this year. That production figure is one billion pounds higher than this year's production. Most of this additional milk will go into manufactured dairy products. The demand for fluid milk and cream is not expected to be as strong next year as this year, due to a moderate decline in income. However, the supply was too small to meet the demand in 1944, so that consumption of fluid milk and cream may not decline per person. The demand for manufactured dairy products will probably be large in relation to the supply in 1945, unless there's a large drop in purchases for the armed forces.

The dairy feed situation looks brighter for next year. Dairy farmers may not find it as hard to fill their feed requirements as they did this year. And compared with the long-time average, dairy feed prices are expected to be more favorable than any other important livestock feed prices, except possibly corn for hogs.

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And here's an announcement for you poultrymen. Order your egg cases for the heavy winter and spring production right now, if you haven't already done that. And that applies to either new or used cases, whether they're fiber or wood. To avoid damage of your eggs, waste of food, and loss of profits, order your egg cases now, so you won't have to ship in inferior cases.

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There's been some talk lately to the effect that the War Food Administration has dropped the Victory Garden Program for next year...and that there won't be any need for Victory Gardens. Well, this is not the case. There most definitely will be a need for Victory Gardens, so don't throw away the garden tools...just keep them in good condition for next year. No matter when the war ends there will always be a need for an abundant supply of fresh fruits and vegetables. Gardens will be just as necessary for a healthy diet in peace as they are in wartime...and those who grow their own fruits and vegetables will be sure of having them in their prime. So don't give up the idea of next year's Victory Garden. Start planning it now!

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Here's the latest news about the supplies of meat. In general, the War Food Administration expects more beef, adequate veal supplies, and less pork, lamb, and mutton, for the civilian market. Those are just the bare facts of course...and there's a lot of background I'd like to tell you about.

Let's look at the beef situation first. Most of the cattle have been coming to market directly from the range country without being fattened in the feed lots of the Middle West. This means that a larger proportion than usual of civilian meat supplies will be of the utility and commercial grades.

Seasonally heavy marketings of beef cattle are expected this month. Cattle slaughter has been 20 to 30 percent heavier than a year ago, and we're eating more meat per person than we did before the war...in spite of heavy requirements for meat by our armed forces.

Farmers and cattlemen have done an excellent job...and although the War Food Administration has increased the amount of meat which Federally inspected packers must set aside for Government use...we'll continue to have beef on our meat counters. But of course, as I said before, a larger than usual amount of that meat will be of the Commercial and utility grades... which is just as nutritious as the higher grade beef.

More cattle are going to the feeding pens now than was anticipated....and that means the possibility that some of the better grades will be available to civilians after the first of the year.

Veal slaughter was heavy during the past summer....and it's expected to continue heavy for the next few months. Since the government doesn't require any veal to be set aside, most of the supply is available for the civilian trade, and there will be as much on the market for a few months ahead as there has been in the past. As a matter of fact, beef and veal together make up a pretty large part of the national meat supply. This year, they'll probably account for about 45 percent of our total supply of meat. About 51 percent of our meat will be pork, and lamb and mutton will make up the remaining four percent.

A few months ago, all cuts of pork were abundant...in fact, the War Food Administration was asking homemakers in some areas to buy more bacon. Now bacon and ham and pork loins are scarce. One reason for this situation is that not nearly as many hogs are coming to market as a few months ago.... and not as many as a year ago, either. Hog slaughter for October through December is expected to be at least 15 percent higher than it was last year at this same time.

Of course, last year at this time record numbers of hogs were coming to market. In fact, the hog population was larger than supplies of feed to support it. Now, we've just passed through the season for light marketings. Beginning in late July and continuing through September hog marketing usually drops off. This year the seasonal drop has been larger than usual...because of very heavy marketing earlier this year.

Of course a great deal of pork is set aside for military use, too. Federally inspected packers are required to set aside about one-third of the pork they slaughter to meet military and other war emergency requirements...and about 75 percent of all our pork is federally inspected. That means that about 25 percent of the pork supply must be set aside for government purchase. Actually, the government is taking no more pork than before...as a matter of fact, government buying was heavier last winter than it is now. But civilan supplies of pork will be lighter simply because production will be lower.

The 1944 spring pig crop is moving to market and this should improve supplies...but for the next few weeks, the choice of pork cuts will be limited.

Lamb and mutton supplies will be short, too. The lamb crop is much reduced...and marketings are expected to be very much lower than the record slaughters of a year ago.

American homemakers have learned, and are learning to be ingenious with the meats they get...and to produce delicious healthful and attractive meals with the lower grades and poorer cuts of meat. Utility grade beef can be cooked a great many different ways...it's good to eat if it's treated right...and American homemakers know how to make it that way.

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And now to conclude I'd like to tell you what Judge Marvin Jones, War Food Administrator said recently about the Harvest-Time Crop Report. Said Judge Jones:..."The harvest-time crop report writes another amazing record of American farm production. And who may have had doubts or fears will be comforted to know that the available farm machinery and labor supply, the weather, and the war food program, imperfect as all these were in some details, still were sufficient to make it possible for farmers to achieve this now all-time record food production. With this year's record, we are safely through that critical period of expanding needs, both for immediate use and reserves, which challenged us at the beginning of the war".